

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 BERLIN 6550

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: IGOV, GE
SUBJ: EAST GERMAN WRITERS GO PUBLIC WITH CRITICISM OF SED

REF: BERLIN 6469

1. SUMMARY: IN SEPARATE ARTICLES APPEARING IN THE
WESTERN PRESS THE WEEK OF JULY 18, SEVERAL PROMINENT GDR
WRITERS AND INTELLECTUALS HAVE ENGAGED IN THE FIRST LARGE
SCALE PUBLIC RITICISM OF THE GDR SINCE THE EXPATRIATION
OF GDR SINGER-POET WOLF BIERMANN IN NOVEMBER, 1976. THEIR
DECISION TO GO PUBLIC AT THIS TIME REFLECTS A GROWING
PESSIMISM IN THE GDR CULTURAL COMMUNITY ABOUT LONG-TERM
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PROSPECTS FOR LIBERALIZATION IN THE GDR. RECENT
STATEMENTS FROM GDR SOURCES INDICATE THAT BIERMANN WAS
FORCED TO LEAVE THE GDR BECAUSE THE SED HAD EVIDENCE THAT
HE WAS BECOMING THE FOCAL POINT OF A POTENTIAL ORGANIZED
DISSIDENT MOVEMENT IN THE GDR. ONE GDR SOURCE MAINTAINS
THAT THE SED POLITBURO IS OUT TO PREVENT ATOMIZED DIS-
SATISFACTION FROM COALESCING INO ORGANIZED DISSIDENCE,

AND THUS WILL CONTINUE TO ALLOW DISSATISFIED WRITERS
AND INTELLECTUALS TO LEAVE THE GDR. END SUMMARY.

2. SEVERAL PROMINENT GDR WRITERS HAVE GONE PUBLIC
IN WESTERN PRESS INTERVIEWS DURING THE PAST WEEK TO
EXPRESS THEIR VIEWS ON THE CURRENT SITUATION IN THE GDR.
JUREK BECKER AND STEFAN HEYM, BOTH PROMINENT NOVELISTS
AND BIERMANN PETITION SIGNERS, HAVE STATED THEIR VIEWS
IN FRG WEEKLY DER SPIEGEL AND NEWSWEEK RESPECTIVELY
WHILE WRITER RAINER KUNZE, A RECENT EMIGRE TO THE FRG,
HAS GRANTED AN INTERVIEW TO THE WASHINGTON POST. IN
ADDITION, DISSIDENT GDR SCIENTIST ROBERT HAVEMANN,
UNDER HOUSE ARREST SINCE NOVEMBER 1976, HAS SMUGGLED AN
ARTICLE TO FRG WEEKLY DIE ZEIT REJECTING SOCIALISM
AS PRACTICED IN THE GDR.

3. BOTH BECKER AND HEYM MAINTAIN IN THEIR INTERVIEWS
THAT THEY DO NOT INTEND TO JOIN THE GROWING STREAM OF
WRITERS AND PERFORMERS APPLYING TO LEAVE THE GDR. THEY
ALSO VOW, HOWEVER, TO STATE THEIR OPINIONS OPENLY IN
THE FUTURE AND EMPHASIZE THEIR RIGHT TO CRITICIZE THE
GDR. BECKER, WHO RECENTLY QUIT THE GDR WRITERS
ASSOCIATION TO PROTEST INCREASED PRESSURE ON CRITICAL
WRITERS IN THAT ORGANIZATION, ARGUES THAT HE NO LONGER
INTENDS TO KEEP SILENT ON THE BASIS OF SOLIDARITY WITH
THE SED. CITING 1968 AS AN EXAMPLE OF HIS PREVIOUS SENSE
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OF LOYALTY, WHEN HE PROTESTED THE CZECH INVASION ONLY
IN ESTABLISHED CHANNELS WITHIN THE GDR RATHER THAN IN
THE WESTERN PRESS, BECKER STATES THAT HIS CONFIDENCE IN
THE SED HAS BEEN SHAKEN SINCE THE BIERMANN AFFAIR AND HIS
PARTY LOYALTY HAS THUS DISAPPEARED.

4. REFLECTING ON THE BIERMANN OUSTER, BECKER CLAIMS
THAT THE SED HAS PLANNED IN ADVANCE TO RID ITSELF OF
THE CONTROVERSIAL SINGER-POET AND HAD USED HIS COLOGNE
CONCERT MERELY AS A PRETEXT. BECKER FEELS THAT BIERMANN
HAD WORRIED THE SED BY GIVING A CONCERT IN A GDR CHURCH
IN SUMMER, 1976, AND BY KEEPING A RECORD OF THE CASES OF
DISSATISFIED GDR CITIZENS WHO CAME TO HIM WITH THEIR
COMPLAINTS. BECKER DENIES THAT THERE EVER WAS A
LIBERALIZATION IN SED CULTURAL POLICIES PRIOR TO BIERMANN;
INSTEAD, THE SOMEWHAT GREATER MANEUVERABILITY GRANTED
GDR WRITERS IN RECENT YEARS HAD COME FROM NECESSITY, NOT
DESIGN. THE SED HAD EASED UP SLIGHTLY AND TEMPORARILY
FOR TACTICAL REASONS, NOT OUT OF A CONVICTION THAT GDR
WRITERS AND ARTISTS NEEDED GREATER FREEDOM FOR THEIR WORKS.
BECKER MAINTAINS THAT THE SED CULTURAL LINE HAS BECOME

MORE ORTHODOX SINCE BIERMANN, WITH PARTY LINE WORKS
INCREASINGLY PRAISED WHILE MORE CRITICAL WORKS, IF
THEY APPEAR AT ALL, COME OUT IN LIMITED EDITIONS AND
DISAPPEAR QUICKLY WITHOUT PUBLICITY.

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5. BECKER AND HEYM BOTH CRITICIZE THE SED FOR KEEPING
BIERMANN PROTESTERS JUERGEN/FUCHS, CHRISTIAN KUNERT,
GERULF PANNACH AND EIGHT STUDENTS IMPRISONED IN JENA.
HEYM GOES ON TO DENY THAT THERE IS AN ACTUAL DISSIDENT
MOVEMENT IN THE GDR, BUT OBSERVES THAT SOME GDR WRITERS
ARE BEGINNING TO SPEAK THEIR MINDS MORE FREELY, THEREBY
UPSETTING THE CONSERVATIVE WING OF THE GDR LITERARY
ESTABLISHMENT AND MAKING FUTURE CONFLICTS MORE DIFFICULT
TO COVER UP THAN BEFORE.

6. IN HIS WASHINGTON POST INTERVIEW, KUNZE ONCE
AGAIN ATTEMPTS TO JUSTIFY HIS EMIGRATION TO THE FRG, MUCH
CRITICIZED BY HIS YOUNGER FOLLOWERS
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IN JENA AS A COWARDLY ACT ON THE BASIS OF FAILING HEALTH AND THREATS FROM GDR AUTHORITIES. KUNZE ARGUES THAT THE PRESIDENT'S STAND ON HUMAN RIGHTS GIVES WELCOMED MORAL SUPPORT TO CRITICS IN THE GDR, BUT DOUBTS THAT MORAL SUPPORT ALONE IS ENOUGH WHEN IT COMES TO THE QUESTION OF POLITICAL CHANGE. KUNZE, WHOSE RECENT BEST SELLER "THE WONDERFUL YEARS" CRITICIZES THE SITUATION OF YOUTH IN THE GDR, MAINTAINS THAT MANY YOUNG EAST GERMANS ARE LOOKING FOR SOCIAL CHANGE. HE LAMENTS THAT THIS GROUP IS CURRENTLY A SMALL MINORITY, HOWEVER; OUT OF THE AVERAGE GDR HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 24 STUDENTS, KUNZE STATES, TWO ARE FOR THE SYSTEM, TWO ARE FOR CHANGE, AND THE REST ARE OPPORTUNISTS CONFORMING TO GET AHEAD.

7. IN HIS FIRST ARTICLE WRITTEN FOR THE WESTERN PRESS SINCE THE GDR PLACED HIM UNDER HOUSE ARREST EIGHT MONTHS AGO, GDR DISSIDENT SCIENTIST HAVEMANN ATTACKS SOVIET UNION AND GDR MARXISM LARGELY ON THE BASIS ON THE WRITINGS OF LESZEK KOLAKOWSKI. HE DENIES THAT THE POLITICAL SYSTEM CONSTRUCTED BY STALIN, ULBRICHT AND THEIR BUREAUCRATIC FOLLOWERS CAN BE ACCEPTED AS TRUE MARXISM. HAVEMANN, WHO IN THE YEAR BEFORE BIERMANN'S OUSTER CAME OUT REGULARLY FOR EUROCOMMUNIST IDEAS IN THE FRG MEDIA, ARGUES THAT ANY THEORY THAT CATEGORICALLY REJECTS ANY CHANGE IN IT BASIC POSITIONS, THAT CONDEMNS ALL REVISIONISM, CAN NO LONGER BE CONSIDERED SCIENTIFIC. TO BE A SCIENTIST ACCORDING TO MARX, HAVEMANN ARGUES, MEANS TO BE PREPARED AT ALL TIMES TO PRACTICE REVISIONISM.

8. COMMENT: BECKER AND HEYM' DECISION TO CRITICIZE THE GDR IN THE WESTERN PRESS APPEARS TO RESULT FROM A GROWING PESSIMISM AMONG GDR INTELLECTUALS ABOUT PROSPECTS FOR LIBERALIZATION IN THE GDR. LIKE BECKER, MANY WRITERS WE HAVE SPOKEN WITH RECENTLY NOW BELIEVE

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THAT WHAT THEY PERCEIVED AS U MILD EASING UP BEFORE BIERMANN WAS NOT A LONG-TERM TREND, BUT MERELY A TACTICAL PHASE IN THE SED'S CONSTANT EFFORT TO PREVENT INTERNAL CRITICISM AND DISSENT. ONE WRITER DESCRIBED THE PROCESS AS ETERNALLY ALTERNATING BETWEEN STEPPED UP PRESSURE AD TEOPORARY RELAXATION AS THE SED ATTEMPTS TO KEEP ITS WRITERS AND INTELLECTUALS OFF BALANCE AND IN LINE. GROWING NUMBERS OF GDR WRITERS AND PERFORMERS ARE AT LEAST TALING ABOUT LEAVING THE GDR NOT BECAUSE THEY FEEL SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASED PRESSURE FROM THE SED - IN FACT

THE PARTY IS CURRENTLY TRYING TO PLACATE THE BETTER KNOWN WRITERS BY MAKING IT EASY FOR THEM TO OBTAIN VISAS TO VISIT THE WEST. INSTEAD, MANY APPEAR TO HAVE ABANDONED THEIR BELIEF IN A LONG-TERM LIBERALIZATION IN THE GDR AND BELIEVE IF THEY WANT TO OPT FOR THE FRG, NOW IS THE TIME TO DO SO WHILE THE SED IS ALLOWING DISSATISFIED ARTISTS TO LEAVE.

9. IN A RECENT CONVERSATION, THE CULTURAL EDITOR OF CDU-EAST NEWSPAPER NEUE ZEIT COMMENTED TO EMBOFF ON THE SED'S CURRENT APPROACH TO POTENTIAL DISSIDENCE. HE MADE HIS OBSERVATIONS HAVING JUST RETURNED FROM A THREE WEEK ORIENTATION COURSE FOR CULTURAL FUNCTIONARIES ORGANIZED BY THE SED AND THE GDR MINISTRY OF CULTURE. THS EDITOR SAID THAT A CLEAR MAJORITY IN THE POLITBURO WAS FOR ALLOWING POTENTIAL DISSIDENTS TO LEAVE THE GDR TO KEEP INTERNAL DISSATISFACTION DIFFUSE AND DISORGANIZED. ONLY A SMALL MINORITY FELT THAT THE GDR HURT ITSELF IN THE LONG RUN BY LOSING ESTABLISHED CULTURAL FIGURES POPULAR WITH THE GDR POPULATION.

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THOSE CONCERNED WITH ECONOMICS ARGUED THAT ECONOMIC PROBLEMS FACING THE GDR WERE SO PRESSING THAT CULTURAL QUESTIONS CARRIED SCANT WEIGHT, AND DISSATISFIED INTELLECTUALS SHOULD BE GOTTEN RID OF TO PREVENT DISTRACTION FROM MORE IMPORTANT PROBLEMS. OTHER POLITBURO MEMBERS REPORTEDLY FELT THAT INTERNAL PEACE AND QUIET WAS ESSENTIAL DURING THE BELGRADE CONFERENCE AND THUS ALSO SUPPORTED THE IDEA OF LETTING POTENTIAL DISSIDENTS LEAVE. THOSE CONCERNED WITH SECURITY WERE OUT TO PREVENT ORGANIZED DISSIDENCE AS IN POLAND OR CZECHOSLOVAKIA, AND THUS WERE THE STRONGEST PROPONENTS OF GETTING RID OF DISSATISFIED WRITERS AND INTELLECTUALS BEFORE THEY HAD A CHANCE TO ORGANIZE. CONFIDENTIAL

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10. THE NEUE ZEIT EDITOR SAID SED OFFICIALS HAD REVEALED DURING THE RECENT CONFERENCE THAT BIERMANN HAD BEEN OUSTED BECAUSE BY LATE 1976 HE APPEARED ON THE WAY TO BECOMING THE HEAD OF AN ORGANIZED DISSIDENT GROUP IN THE GDR. THE LINE NOW WAS THAT HIS OUSTER WAS A WELL-PLANNED ACTION TAKEN FOR SECURITY REASONS. THIS VERSION IS LENT SUPPORT BY BECKER'S REVELATION THAT BIERMANN HAD BEEN KEEPING A RECORD OF COMPLAINTS AGAINST SED ACTIONS.

11. WE NOTE THAT BECKER AND HEYM'S STATEMENTS ON THE PLIGHT OF THOSE IMPRISONED IN JENA WERE NOT STRONG, AND THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE REACTION ON THIS POINT IN THE FRG PRESS SO FAR. REPORTS FROM JENA PERSIST THAT THE ARRESTED WILL GO ON TRIAL SOON AND FACE PRISON SENTENCES OF UP TO TEN YEARS.

12. THERE ARE AS YET NO INDICATIONS WHETHER OTHER PROMINENT GDR WRITERS WILL FOLLOW BECKER AND HEYM'S EXAMPLE AND CRITICIZE THE GDR VIA WESTERN MEDIA. WHILE THE EAST BERLIN RUMOR MILL HAS BECKER APPLYING SOON FOR EMIGRATION TO ISRAEL, BECKER HAS TOLD EMBOFFS THAT HE INTENDS TO STAY IN THE GDR AND THE SED WILL HAVE TO ACT FIRST IF IT WANTS HIM TO LEAVE. BECKER IS IRRITATED AT RECENT FRG PRESS REPORTS THAT HE PLANS TO LEAVE AND THAT HIS LATEST BOOK HAS BEEN REJECTED BY GDR AUTHORITIES, WHICH IS NOT THE CASE. ACCORDING TO THE NEUE ZEIT EDITOR, THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT THE BOOK MAY IN FACT BE PUBLISHED IN THE GDR THOUGH IN PREDICTABLY SMALL EDITIONS. BECKER REPORTS THAT HIS NEW NOVEL DEALS WITH A MAN AT MID-LIFE WHO SUDDENLY REALIZES THAT HIS LIFE TO THAT POINT HAS BEEN BASED ON TACTICAL COMPROMISES.

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HE BEGINS TO SPEAK HIS MIND FREELY AND TO ACT ON THE
BASIS OF PRINCIPLE, THEREBY DESTROYING THE STRUCTURE
OF HIS PREVIOUS EXISTENCE, BUT FINDING HIMSELF IN THE
PROCESS. THE AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL CHARACTER OF THE NOVEL IS
UNMISTAKABLE, AND IF THE BOOK IS FINALLY TURNED DOWN,
BECKER MAY WELL BE THE NEXT TO LEAVE THE GDR. POLANSKY

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